

REMARKS

Claims 18-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 18-20 are amended. No new matter is added.

I. Personal Interview

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the personal interview conducted on March 15, 2004. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

II. Drawings

As discussed during the personal interview, Fig. 5 is amended to remove the Japanese characters.

III. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 19 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Claims 19 and 20 are amended in reply to the rejection. Thus, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claims 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, be withdrawn.

IV. Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claim 18 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over JP 9-300400 to Suzuki (Suzuki) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,109,645 to Totani et al. (Totani); claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Totani and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,772,240 to Vavalidis; and claim 20 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Totani and Vavalidis and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,149,479 to Nakajima. The rejections are respectfully traversed.

The Office Action alleges that Suzuki discloses each and every feature recited in rejected claim 18, but for the use of a three-layer skin. To overcome the admitted deficiency, the Office Action combines Totani for its teaching of a facing member 17 having three layers and alleges that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the

invention was made to substitute the three-layer skin of Totani for the two-layer skin of Suzuki.

As discussed during the personal interview, Applicants assert that neither Suzuki nor Totani, whether considered alone or in combination, disclose or suggest each and every feature recited in the rejected claims. For example, the combination of references does not disclose or suggest a method for molding a vehicle interior member having an airbag door portion comprising *inter alia* positioning a three-layer skin having a diagonal cut portion with a cutting direction inclined relative to a surface in a first mold, closing the first mold and a second mold and injecting a hard resin into a cavity defined by the three-layer skin and the second mold.

In Suzuki, a two-layer skin 21 consisting of a surface layer 22 and a rear foam layer 23 is arranged in the cavity mold 43 so that the rear foam layer 23 is turned toward the core mold 42 and the tip of the projection 45 of the core mold 42 is pressed to the rear surface of a skin by mold clamping the core mold 42 to the cavity mold 45 together thereby forming a notch in the rear foam layer 23 of the skin. Thus, the skin 21 that is arranged in the cavity mold 43 does not have a notch formed in it at the time it is set into the mold. Rather, it is the pointed projection 45 formed on the surface of the core mold 42 which forms the notch in the skin 21 upon clamping of the core mold 42 and the cavity mold 43. The formation of the notch by the pointed projection forms a slit 32 on the rear side of the skin. (See the Abstract and Figs. 1-9 of Suzuki)

In contrast, as recited in the rejected claims, a three-layer skin having a diagonal cut portion with a cutting direction inclined relative to a surface in a first mold is set into the mold. Thus, the diagonal cut portion is provided with the three-layer skin before setting the three-layer skin into the mold. Additionally, even substituting the three-layer skin of Totani

for the two-layer skin of Suzuki does not disclose or suggest each and every feature recited in the rejected claims as Totani does not provide for the deficiencies of Suzuki discussed above.

Rather, Totani merely discloses injecting a first thermoplastic into a mold, injecting a second thermoplastic resin capable of fusing with the first thermoplastic resin to form the cover portion of the interior finish member, removing the interior finish member from the mold, and notching the interior finish member along the periphery to form a breakable portion (col. 3, lines 23-31 of Totani). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request the rejection of claims 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 18-20 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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